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Sept 12

DCI/IC 75-048

9 SEP 1975

General Alexander M. Haig, Jr.
Commander In Chief
U.S. European Command
APO New York 09128

Dear Al:

For some years, particularly since my tour as Defense Attache to Moscow 1971-73, I have been pestering the Intelligence folk to place greater emphasis on supporting our service schools and colleges as well as our tactical commanders and their troops directly with better and more comprehensive materials on how our potential enemy is going to look if and when he comes at us. The thesis: the information is available -- not always easily so, but available. The problem: this kind of intelligence hangs at about the third priority rung and therefore, we don't commit the requisite resources to move it.

On the other hand, if Bill DePuy is right -- and I think he is, the outcome of that first clash is going to be crucial. That means we are going to have to know the enemy pretty well at the outset: we won't have time to study him once the shooting starts.

Appropos of these remarks, I am sending you two things: the first is a letter from Moscow of September 1971, trying to get something going in this area. (It got nowhere). The second is a short research paper recently done by the Office of Strategic Research, CIA, with whom I have been continuing to worry the problem. I am sorry the paper is classified, but it even took some doing to get down to the SECRET level because of some of the sensitive sources and methods involved in collecting the basic initial information. (We'll do better next time.) I do consider the paper to be quite well done and if its findings are correct, it may help to explain the large amount of armor parked just across your command's doorstep.

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Now -- some sort of a statement from you that there is utility in this kind of effort (if this indeed is your perception) could be put to good use, i. e., I'll wave it around a bit to get more attention focused on the subject. I am sending copies separately to George Blanchard, Bill DePuy, and Don Starry at the Armored School, with the same end in mind.

Warm regards.

Sincerely,

/s/ Samuel V. Wilson

Samuel V. Wilson
Lieutenant General, USA
Deputy to the DCI for the
Intelligence Community

Attachments:

1. Letter
2. Research Paper

SVW/nw/9Sep75

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16 SEP 1975

IC - 75 - 2491

Major General Willard Latham
Commanding General, USA Infantry Center
Commandant, USA Infantry School
Fort Benning, Georgia 31905

Dear Will:

I am sending you a research paper recently done by the Office of Strategic Research, CIA, which conceivably may be of some use in your curriculum. For several years I have felt that our service schools have not been receiving some of the more useful types of research and analytical products that the Intelligence Community is generating and I intend to do what I can to change that.

I commend this document to you and your faculty. I consider it a first rate piece of work and I hope you will find it useful.

A separate copy has been provided to General DePuy under a personal note.

High regards.

Sincerely,

/s/ Samuel V. Wilson

Samuel V. Wilson
Lieutenant General, USA
Deputy to the DCI for the
Intelligence Community

Attachment:

CIA Research Paper
Flexibility in Soviet Offensive Concepts:
The Roles of Armor and Other Ground Forces

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Repts 12

16 SEP 1975

IC - 75 - 2490

Major General Donn A. Starry
Commanding General, USA Armor Center
Commandant, Armor School and Commanding
General, USATC
Fort Knox, Kentucky 40131

Dear Donn:

I am sending you a research paper recently done by the Office of Strategic Research, CIA, which conceivably may be of some use in your curriculum. For several years I have felt that our service schools have not been receiving some of the more useful types of research and analytical products that the Intelligence Community is generating and I intend to do what I can to change that.

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DCI-IC 75-051

16 SEP 1975

General William DePuy
Commanding General, US Training and
Doctrine Command
Fort Monroe, Virginia 23651

Dear Bill:

Twenty four years ago this fall I wheedled some \$18,000 out of Major General Alex Bolling, Sr., then ACofS, G-2/DA, and used it to set up a small group of ex-Soviet officers in the Old Post Office Building downtown Washington. Known initially as the Soviet Consultant Group, later renamed the Soviet Handbook and Analysis Group, this team of World War II vintage Soviet field grade officers began immediately to justify their meager salaries by developing studies and handbooks in the general subject area of Soviet military doctrine and tactics, keyed broadly at the division and regimental level.

Most of the original oldsters in this group have long since passed on, and their places have been taken by less widely versed, low-level defector types, who lack the extensive military education and combat experience of their more talented predecessors. Nonetheless, the group still exists and continues turning out an occasional product, albeit of less quality and relevance than its earlier publications.

I relate the above simply to establish the antecedents of this letter and its attachments. Over the years I have continued to worry the problem of studying the enemy and trying to make sure that commanders will know what to expect from their Soviet and Chinese opposite numbers. Last year I went down to Benning during the Christmas holiday season and had some good sessions with your young instructors of Infantry to see how they were handling the subject and how they might be supported more effectively intelligence-wise. As a follow-on, we found some travel funds in one of Bill Colby's accounts and picked up the tab for a two-day session at Benning in May between DIA and Army intelligence analysts and Infantry School instructors, which seemed to have had some potentially useful results.

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The attachments are merely the latest carom shot, an attempt to focus attention and move the ball a few yards farther. You may enjoy leafing through the OSR/CIA research paper, although it suffers from being rather general and abstract and lacks the explicit detail to be of real utility to your people. With a little more commitment to the problem, however, we can do better.

Now--Am I meddling in your business or am I on track?

Warm regards.

Sincerely,

/s/ Samuel V. Wilson

Samuel V. Wilson
Lieutenant General, USA
Deputy to the DCI for the
Intelligence Community

Attachments:

1. Letter to General Haig w/attachments
2. Letter to General Blanchard w/o attachments

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DCI/IC 75-050

16 SEP 1975

General George S. Blanchard
CinC USAREUR/Seventh Army
APO NY 09403

Dear George:

In mid-December 1972 you sat on the edge of my hospital bed at Walter Reed (the Soviets had done me in -- temporarily) and asked me some questions about Soviet armor doctrine. My answers were inadequate, I'm afraid, and I've been uncomfortable on that score ever since.

Actually the discomfort began a long time ago. For some years, particularly since the Moscow tour, I have pestered the Intelligence folk to give more emphasis to supporting our service schools and colleges, as well as our tactical commanders and their troops directly, with better and more comprehensive materials on how our potential enemy is going to look if and when he comes at us. The thesis: the information is available -- not always easily so, but available. The problem: this kind of intelligence hangs at about the third priority rung and therefore, we don't commit the requisite resources to move it.

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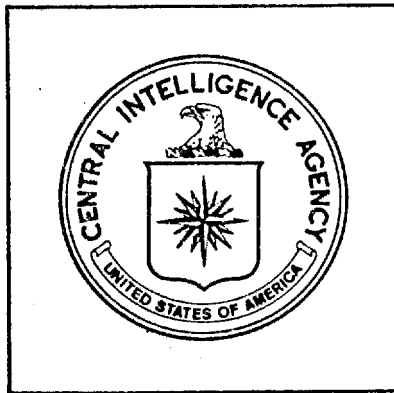
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*Flexibility in Soviet Offensive Concepts:
The Roles of Armor and Other Ground Forces*

Secret

SR RP 75-4
July 1975

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Directorate of Intelligence
July 1975

RESEARCH PAPER

Flexibility in Soviet Offensive Concepts:
The Roles of Armor and Other Ground Forces

Preface

The arms reduction negotiations between NATO and the Warsaw Pact have focused renewed attention on the balance of forces in Central Europe. In this area, Western defense officials have been concerned by the size of Pact armored forces and the threat they pose to NATO. This concern has grown as Pact armored forces--already the world's largest--continue to increase in size and quality. This paper surveys the evolution of the basic types of units in the Soviet armored forces, how they are structured, and how they are to be used in the event of war.

The information on which this report is based comes from a variety of sources, some sensitive and not explicitly cited. Basic armor doctrine and tactics are reflected, however, in unclassified Soviet writings as well as in numerous defector reports and exercises.

Comments and queries regarding this publication are welcome. They may be directed to of the Theater Forces Division, Office of Strategic Research, code 143, extension

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Summary

Soviet military planning in the nuclear era used to be based on the assumption that any war with NATO would be nuclear from the outset. Since the late sixties, however, Soviet operational concepts and weapon developments have reflected increasing stress on flexibility for nuclear or conventional war. The flexibility policy has occasioned some change in the expected combat role of armored forces, but that role is essentially the same in either type of conflict. And the Soviet tank force remains the largest in the world--a status which appears to be the result of several factors, including the offensive focus of Soviet land warfare doctrine as well as economic and institutional momentum.

Because their weapons and tactics had earlier been intended mainly for nuclear war, the Soviets had to deal with certain basic considerations in adapting to a policy of flexibility for conventional war:

- They could no longer rely exclusively on nuclear weapons to achieve the breakthrough in NATO defenses which must precede a massive offensive into enemy territory, a basic tenet of Soviet land warfare doctrine.
- NATO capabilities for stopping a conventional attack increased significantly with the proliferation of more effective antitank weapons.
- The massed forces required to create a breakthrough in NATO defenses during the conventional phase of a war would present a tempting target for the sudden introduction of nuclear weapons by the NATO forces, particularly if the breakthrough attempt were meeting with success.

The Soviets have taken steps over the past several years to compensate for these problems:

- The combined-arms tactics (and, to some extent, the more balanced force structure) which emerged in Soviet ground forces during World War II have been reemphasized with the return to conventional war planning.

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- The number of tanks in the infantry arm of the ground forces has been increased.
- Artillery forces have been enlarged and improved as additional guns and new self-propelled artillery have been introduced into the force.
- The ground attack capabilities of the tactical air forces have been upgraded as aircraft with greater conventional payloads have entered service.
- In military exercises the Soviets continually rehearse tactics to maintain a dispersed posture during the conventional phase of a war for as long as possible before concentrating for a breakthrough of enemy defenses.

In attempting to break through well-prepared enemy defenses without the use of nuclear weapons, present Soviet doctrine calls for the assaulting forces to concentrate much of their artillery and combined-arms forces--primarily motorized rifle divisions--opposite a narrow sector of the defensive front. After an extensive artillery barrage, the combined-arms elements would be committed to secure a breach in the defenses through which large tank units would advance.

Because of the Soviets' commitment to tank warfare--underscored when they recently started large-scale production of a new generation of tanks--it is likely that Soviet offensive doctrine will continue to be based on large tank forces. The main impact of changes in land warfare policy has been, and probably will continue to be, on the equipment and tactics of the supporting arms.

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